



Social Mobility
Commission

Commission Telephone Briefing

7 January 2020 4.00 – 5.00pm

Attendees: Commissioners:
Martina Milburn
(Chair)
Steven Cooper
Sam Friedman
Sandra Wallace

Members of the
Secretariat

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed Commissioners to the briefing session and gave an overview of the agenda. The main points noted were:

2. Corporate update

2.1. Staffing/resourcing

- Secretariat's programme of work for the next three months would be delivered through contractors who were being recruited on short term contracts. This path is being explored due to controls over what our programme budget can be spent on. Contractors would support the delivery of our frontline programme, including story-telling to reach young people and employers. It would be an opportunity for the Commission to explore and pilot new ways of working.
- Following discussion it was agreed that Secretariat would proceed.
- The Commission's admin and programme budgets for 2020-21 were expected to be allocated in February. The Chair would raise the case for an increased budget in her 8 January meeting with Indra Morris, DfE's Director-General for Social Mobility and Disadvantage. The Chair will continue to request the use of programme budget for fixed term contracts to give the secretariat other avenues of onboarding staff to deliver programme activities.

Action: Chair to discuss SMC's budget with Indra Morris in their 8 January meeting.

2.2. Letters to PM and Education Secretary

- The Chair wrote to the Prime Minister and the Education Secretary in December. Following a response from the Education Secretary, a January meeting was being organised. The Prime Minister was yet to respond.

3. Employers programme

3.1 A microsite had been commissioned to host an interactive version of the Employers Toolkit and host other resources for employers. Commissioners endorsed this tool.

4. Monitoring report update

4.1 Commissioners asked for all state of the nation report recommendations that government departments had already implemented to be included within the project's scope.

4.2 An analysis of Department's responses was expected to be completed by early February.

5. Research update

5.1 This paper was originally submitted for discussion at the 18 December Commission meeting. As the meeting overran it was agreed to take this paper to this meeting. Secretariat stated that the majority of midpoint review meetings took place in November. Commissioners reported the meetings were useful but felt that meetings were too long and asked Secretariat to consider the structure and scheduling of future meetings.

5.2 Policy workshops to discuss research findings would be held in January and February and involve a wider range of stakeholders from both within and outside of government. Commissioners will continue to be involved through their roles on the technical panels.

5.3 Of the three projects earmarked at risk in December, two projects were no longer at risk. Some projects will be extended beyond this financial year to deliver a better quality product.

6. Collaboration with Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

6.1 Following December's meeting, the Secretariat has discussed with the EHRC the possibility of developing a research proposal on the voluntary implementation of the Socio-economic Duty in England. The proposal's aim is to equip local authorities with evidence on how to tackle socio-economic disadvantage; the impact on planning and delivery of services and the barriers encountered.

6.2 The initial scope of the project will ask broad research questions to understand what is being done and what would help to make a difference. A toolkit may be an option. The Chair suggested Secretariat meet the LGA to discuss the project scope further. Due to the timing it was agreed that Secretariat would take forward with Commissioners by correspondence.

Action: Secretariat to arrange a meeting with LGA colleagues and continue the dialogue with commissioners by correspondence.